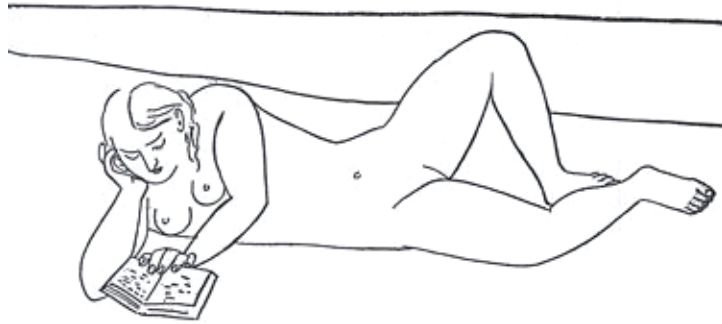


Eros in Poetry and Prose – Them / You ...



Girl Reading Poetry by Pablo Picasso, 1922

Forty Amorous Poems and Prose Edited by

Patrick Bruskiewich

and

Blossom Lanton

December, 2015

Volume Two: The Eros in Poetry and Prose Series

Eros in Poetry and Prose –

Volume Two: Eros in Poetry and Prose Series

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If you would like to submit some poetry or prose to the series Patrick can be contacted at
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The Eros in Prose and Poetry Series

Eros in literature is one of the finest and most sublime way to share one's love.

The purpose of the ***Eros in Prose and Poetry*** Series is to share some of the most amorous and enticing pieces of prose and poetry to be found in the English Language, or which may have been translated into English from the many languages of Love.

This edition of ***Eros in Prose and Poetry*** introduces the writing of Blossom Lanton of Vancouver a young and talented poetess who studied her art in the United Kingdom. There is a writer's statement by her. She has graciously agreed to co-edit this second edition of the ***Eros in Prose and Poetry*** Series.

Love is a higher brain function – lust resides somewhere else tucked away within the inner recesses of the brain. Today much of our modern age has lost the Mystique of Love. So much is crude and rude, explicit and obscene. Very little is left to the imagination, and the imagination is a powerful aphrodisiac!

This Second Edition of the series includes forty pieces of poetry and prose, many of which are being shared for the first time.

Both Blossom and I are hopeful that the Mystique of Love will be awaken in your hearts by the *Eros* and Imagery that we have shared with you from ours.

Blossom Lanton's Artist's Statement

The topic of Eros in prose and poetry is a most enthralling and potent one. From Keats to Shakespeare to Bukowski to Anaïs Nin, it is a captivating part of one's life and a great source of creativity for the greats.

In this publication I have included my poetry based on this theme from the most fruitful part, and start, of my writing career. By compiling works and poetry from the artists who have been most influential to my poetic technique, I have been able to write for the writers I have aspired to be figuratively, and literally, next to.

Through my imagery, I hope I will be able to express to you the truly wonderful sense of Eros so many desire to feel.

Please enjoy my debut collection of poetry alongside my partner and mentor's, Patrick Bruskiewich.

Them / You

by Blossom Lanton

I touched their backs
But they never stirred.

They always walked me
Out

I knew the first one was pretending
The morning after
The bells were ringing
And soon,
It was light outside

I didn't sleep well that night.

I would kiss their shoulders and hold them
In their slumber
But I was too soft,
Too gentle
To wake them

They all had beautiful backs
But I wanted to pluck the stray hairs
That didn't seem to belong
They didn't belong and
I didn't belong but

I wanted to belong to you

And they wanted me to belong to them but I didn't want to

I look at all the smooth round shapes whilst the shower runs:

My huge pale thighs

Touch

They harbor

My prickly pussy

They always look at me and their eyes crawl on my skin

Like beetles

But you never looked at me that way

You looked into my eyes like they were

Pools of gold

And the shower keeps running

And all the glass steams up

But when the water

Hits my skin,

All I can think about are your

Perfect kisses

Your perfect lips on mine

Our weighted breath

Intermingling -

That potent smell

I'll never forget and you'll never forget

But you forget things and I like to keep them

I keep them all lost on the steps of my mind

Waiting for the next train to arrive.



And the Bridegroom by Lucien Freud

The Day is Done

by Henry Wordsworth Longfellow

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain.
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of the day.

not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour;
And tonight I long to rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gush from *their*¹ heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labour,
An nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

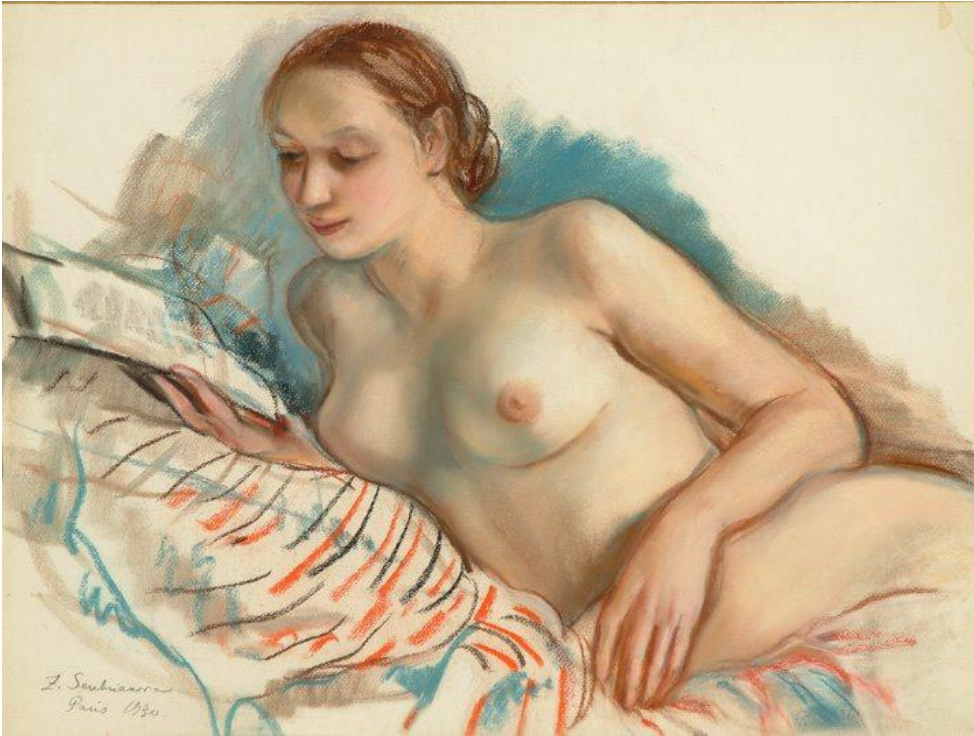
Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benedictions
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music
And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the *Bedouin* ²
As they silently steal away.

footnotes:

1. his changed to their
2. Arab changed to Bedouin: Bedouin is a play on words, as in bed-you-in



Woman Reading a Book (1930) by Z. Sererianov

Remember/Rosé

by Blossom Lanton

chewing gum constellations
on the pavement
i miss the taste of your cherry tongue
my mouth is stained
with the coffee and cigarettes
do you remember –
the bottle we shared
how i poured the contents
of our rose tinted glasses
to save for later
do you remember –
my lips
and how i begged to be bitten
i remember –
your assertive fingers
tangled in my hair
i remember –
your crooked smile
your teeth of which i desired peeking
i remember –
you
do you remember –
me?



Graciela by Iturbide

Come Sit Thee Down

Anonymous (before 1600)

Come sit thee down by this cool stream
Never yet warmed by Titan's beams!
My tender youth thy waist shall clip
And fix upon your cherry lips;
And lay thee down on the green bed,
Where thou shall lose thy maiden's head.

See how the little Philip Sparrow,
Whose songs do overflow with marrow,
On yonder bough how he doth prove
With his mate the joys of love,
And doth instruct thee, as he doth trad.

O you younglings, be not nice!
Coyness in maids is such a vice,
That if in youth you do not marry,
In age young men will let you tarry.
By my persuasion then be led,
And lose in time thy maiden's head.

Clothes that embroidered be with gold,
If never worn, will quickly mold;
If in time you do not pluck
The damask rose or the Apricot,
In unflinching Autumn they'll be dead

Then lose in time thy maidenhead.

Anonymous(before 1600),

Percy's Folio, MSS. Vol. IV

Modern Translation by Patrick Bruskiewich



Photo by Frank Eugene

Disappointments of the Undersexed

by Blossom Lanton

I exhale to the
Ceiling,
The air reaches the helium balloons
Children let go

The same feelings(,) I feel.

Now I am older,
That trivial feeling
Those lost balloons created,
That emptiness,
Reaches me
In a different sense.

A failed night:
My fault but not my fault
But it is my fault

I am sorry, I am sorry

A night full of laughs - supposed
Now an evening of sighs and deeper exhales
From Lady Disappointment

I am sorry to be sorry

I am sorry I am sorry

Pent up frustrations of the sorrowful –

I reach, but cannot reach

Those balloons –

Only in breathing

Can I touch them.

But my fingertips evade skin tonight,

And my heart thumps in my chest,

Away from yours,

Though my ears listen intently.



Ernest Proctor, *Aphrodite*, 1936

Another Bed

By Charles Bukowski

another bed
another woman

more curtains
another bathroom
another kitchen

other eyes
other hair
other
feet and toes.

everybody's looking.
the eternal search.

you stay in bed
she gets dressed for work
and you wonder what happened
to the last one
and the one before that...
it's all so comfortable –
this love-making
this sleeping together
the gentle kindness...

after she leaves you get up and use her
bathroom,
it's all so intimate and so strange.
you go back to bed and
sleep another hour.

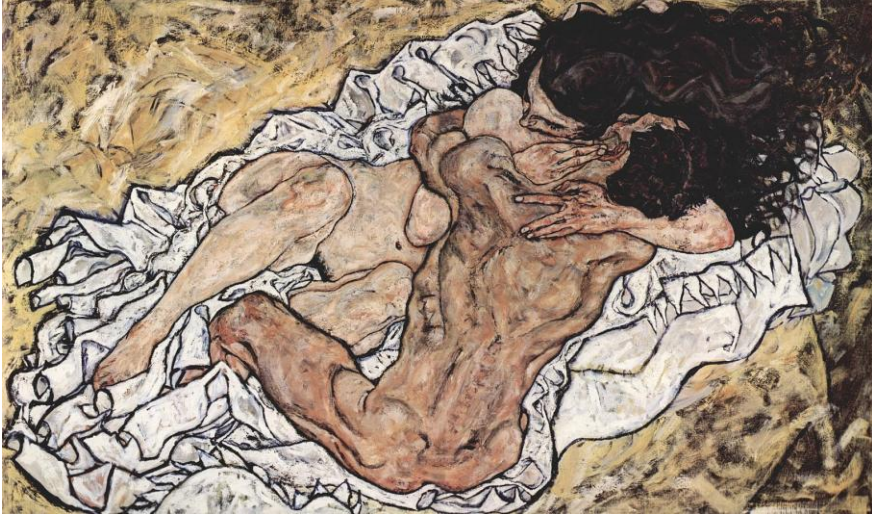
when you leave it's with sadness
but you'll see her again
whether it works out or not.

you drive down to the shore and sit
in your car. it's almost noon.

– another bed, other ears, other
ear rings, other mouths, other slippers, other
dresses
colors, doors, phone numbers.

you were once strong enough to live alone.
for a man nearing sixty you should be more
sensible.

you start the car and shift.
thinking, I'll phone Jeanie when I get in,
I haven't seen her since Friday.



Two Lovers by Egon Schiele

Spring Equinox

by Blossom Lanton

I thought of you
When I was walking in my
Rain speckled purple jeans

I thought of you
When I was sleeping in your
Permanganate stained green shirt

I thought of you
With your hands under my
Embroidered black dress

I thought of you
In your gaudy yellow shirt
And me, fingering the lettering across your back

Then I thought
Of how little time we had
And how that was a shame

Only then did the rain
On the first day of spring
Make sense

Love and Its Mysteries

by e.e. cummings

3

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclothe me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
touching skilfully, mysteriously her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)

nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

7

yes is a pleasant country:

if's wintry

(my lovely)

let's open the year

both is the very weather

(not either)

my treasure,

when violets appear

love is a deeper season

than reason;

my sweet one

(and April's where we're)

8

it is so long since my heart has been with yours

shut by our mingling arms through

a darkness where new lights begin and

increase,

since your mind has walked into

my kiss as a stranger

into the streets and colours of a town –

that i have perhaps forgotten

how, always (from
these hurrying crudities
of blood and flesh) Love
coins His most gradual gesture,

and whittles life to eternity

– after which our separating selves become museums
filled with skilfully stuffed memories



Charcoal sketch by E. E. Cummings
Houghton Library, Harvard University

Blue Lights

by Blossom Lanton

Hands creeping
Strong hand slips
Into the back of my jeans
Skin on skin
Lips between teeth
I'm intoxicated by the sobriety -
The clarity consumes me.

Euphoria creeps over
A warm flush blooms across my cheeks
My fingers ice cold
But they oughtn't be -

I begin to shiver
The sweet anticipation
A stimulating conversation
The wetness of his mouth
Dries on my flawed lips,
My breath continues to quiver.

Premature nostalgia:
The glow behind the bar
Illuminates the courage
I lose all sense,
Anxiety -

Take me home
Spend the awakened night
With me.

I am infatuated
By a night not full of
Yearning hours,
Of nostalgia.

Dragging my fingers,
His skin like Braille,
I feel his words.

Consume me with your company
Make me yours
Make my words yours
And yours, my own.

An idle waiting:
I read the writing on the bathroom walls:
“THE IDES SOFTEN MARCHES”
“PARADISE IS LOST”
I stare back at myself.

The cool glow of
Blue globes.

Elation
Expectancy
The memory -
A homeless man shuffles between

His cold, plastic,
Sheets,
Refuge only in sleep.
Guilt flickers through the mind.

A knowing embrace
Shocks, delights, excites me
(All is but forgotten).

I look back
We talk about bridges, tracks, and tunnels
As we speed in
“The closest thing to teleportation”
The cab driver raises his eyebrows at our fervent embraces.

I trail behind the leader
Through the chain link fence
(Intimidated only slightly)
In a lovers’ march
The heart thumps louder -

The carpet welcomes me,
Stained with that familiar,
Potent smell.

“Hello”
Kisses
Teeth
Tongues
Tattoos
Cotton sheets

Orange walls

Heidegger

Kierkegaard

Shivering

Finishing

Morning

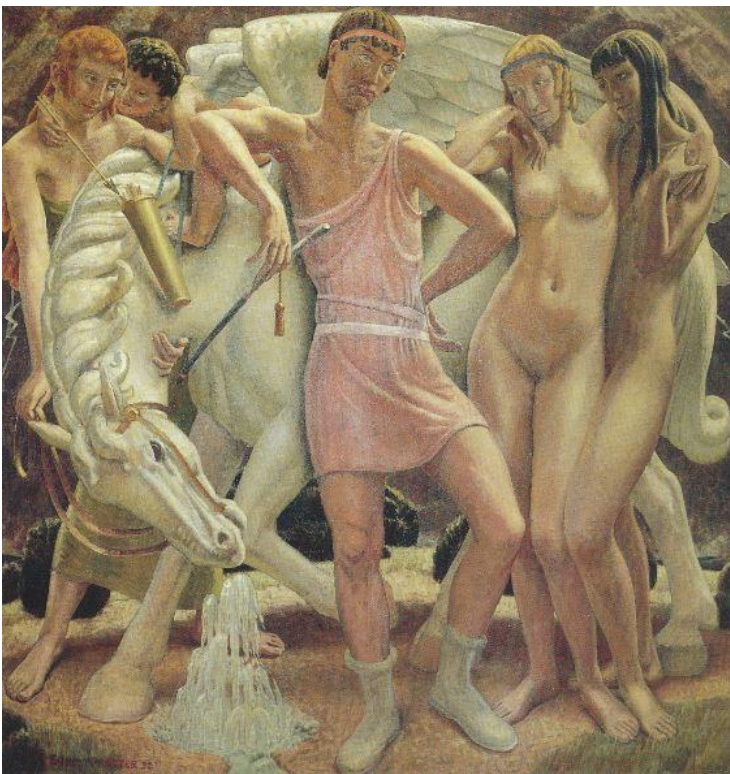
Coffee

Baristas to bartenders

DVDs

The subway wind

“Goodbye”



Ernest Proctor, *Those Who Dare*, 1932

Fragments of Sappho

by Sappho

Fragment 30

night[

girls

all night long

might sing of the love between you and the bride

with violets in her lap

wake! and go call

the young men so that

no more than the bird with piercing voice

shall we sleep

Fragment 31

He seems to me equal to gods that man

whoever he is who opposite you

sits and listens close

to your sweet speaking

and lovely laughing – oh it

puts the heart in my chest on wings

for when I look at you, even a moment, no speaking

is left in me

no: tongue breaks and thin
fire racing under skin
and in eyes no sight and drumming
fills ears

and cold sweat holds me and shaking
grips me all, greener than grass
I am dead – or almost
I seem to me.

But all is to be dared, because even a person of poverty

Fragment 50

For the man who is beautiful is beautiful to see
but the good man will at once also beautiful be.

Fragment 107

do I still yearn for my virginity?



Picture by Frank Eugene

La Petite Mort

by Blossom Lanton

I saw the dead man again today
The dead man who walks
I didn't see him alive
Until this day

Under the sun
And the lonely seagull who caws
to no one

The dead man walking

I lay myself down
Seeing yellow and orange through my
Eyelids

I lay myself down in want of my own
Little death.



Picture by Frank Eugene

The Sun Rising

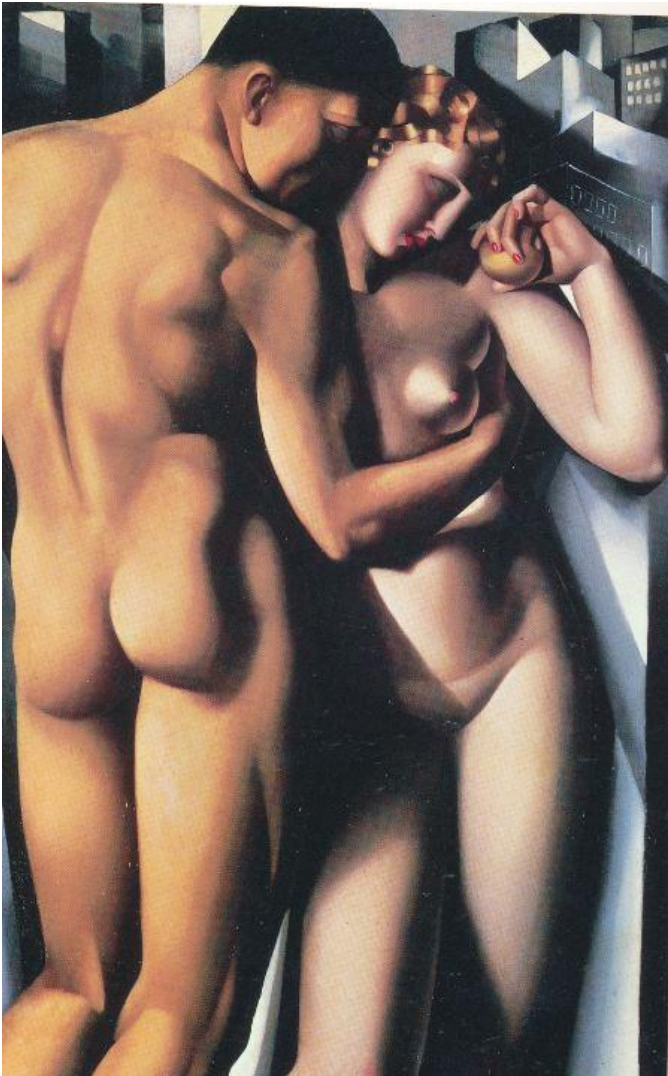
by John Donne

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school boys and sour prentices,
Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices,
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long;
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,

All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus.
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy center is, these walls, thy sphere.



Tamara de Lempicka, Adam and Eve, 1932

The Anti-Glow

by Blossom Lanton

My face:

Much too transparent

My cheeks:

Lacking of hue, un-flushed

My eyes:

Sullen in their sockets

My skin stays dry, not glistening with that

Sweet sweat,

Staying cold,

Not quivering,

But quiet and demure.

Once Again ...

by Patrick Bruskiewich

Once again I open my heart to someone
And once again dust is thrown in
The coals have all but gone out
The embers dulled and fizzled
So much for opening my heart to someone

Where does all the dust come from?
Is there a dust diva who hands
out buckets of the snuff,
with little instruction booklets;
first do this, then do that, then
with pleasure pollywack.

Ashes to ashes ... dust to dust ...
Where is the divine one with the
embers? Please toss me a few coals
before my heart forever grows cold.

Until Next Time

by Blossom Lanton

I realised today that
Love doesn't fizzle out
Until love becomes anew.

Love, or like
Leaves the chest a-flutter,
The palms sweating,
But leaves the extremities cold,
To be warmed
By your hot breath and skin.

Your flesh is mine
To bite,
To scratch,
And mine is all yours to bruise,
To slap -
But also all yours
To kiss.

I lay my head on the pillow of your sturdy chest,
I lay vulnerable to your roaming fingers grazing,
We lay there, eyelashes a-flutter,
Defenseless to each others' ticklish breaths, lest
We both fall sound asleep.

Hold me tight,
Kiss my forehead,
Tickle me,
As cruel time passes...
And we wait for the lukewarm pizza,
And the bittersweet kiss, until
The next time.

It has been so long since my heart has been with yours

by e.e. cummings

shut by our mingling arms through
a darkness where new lights begin and
increase,
since your mind has walked into
my kiss as a stranger
into the streets and colours of a town –

that i have perhaps forgotten
how, always (from
these hurrying crudities
of blood and flesh) Love
coins His most gradual gesture,

and whittles life to eternity

– after which our separating selves become museums filled with skillfully stuffed
memories.

From Which Learns He

by Patrick Bruskiewich

I supped the nectar
from the flower, a rose
in full bloom. Let there
be no fuller place posed

The barb, it pricks
It draws fresh blood.
With my lips I lick
my tongue I did so rub

Across the soft petals
set apart, one left ... one right
Rich pink velvet nettles
that sail away the night

And within? What is there
but Ulysses journey
The epic land laid bare
From which learns he

of gardens and delights
of sea-nymphs that beckon
him – have no fright!
sail your ship right upon

Venus' shoal, a pons
that spans gulfed ground
An island held tightly on
the figure of one's hand.

Such wistful bliss
and music – the song flows
From a mouth far amiss
a face he well does know

The waves they came, they crashed
And suddenly they were gone
Her passions unabashed
The nectar flowed anon.

Renaissance Poems

by Michelangelo Buonarrati

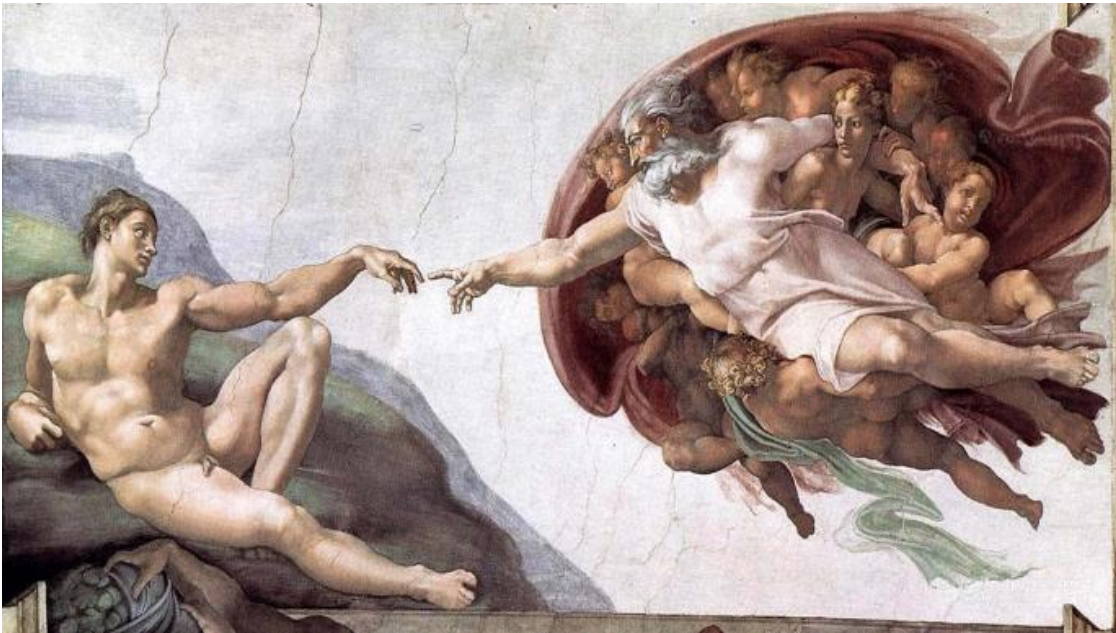
Celestial Love

NO mortal thing enthralled these longing eyes
When perfect peace in thy fair face I found;
But far within, where all is holy ground,
My soul felt Love, her comrade of the skies:
For she was born with God in Paradise;
Nor all the shows of beauty shed around
This fair false world her wings to earth have bound:
Unto the Love of Loves aloft she flies.
Nay, things that suffer death, quench not the fire
Of deathless spirits; nor eternity
Serves sordid Time, that withers all things rare.
Not love but lawless impulse is desire:
That slays the soul; our love makes still more fair
Our friends on earth, fairer in death on high.

Dante

What should be said of him cannot be said;
By too great splendor is his name attended;
To blame is easier than those who him offended,
Than reach the faintest glory round him shed.

This man descended to the doomed and dead
For our instruction; then to God ascended;
Heaven opened wide to him its portals splendid,
Who from his country's, closed against him, fled.
Ungrateful land! To its own prejudice
Nurse of his fortunes; and this showeth well
That the most perfect most of grief shall see.
Among a thousand proofs let one suffice,
That as his exile hath no parallel,
Ne'er walked the earth a greater man than he.



The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo (Sistine Chapel)

The Doom of Beauty

Choice soul, in whom, as in a glass, we see,
Mirrored in thy pure form and delicate,
What beauties heaven and nature can create,
The paragon of all their works to be!

Fair soul, in whom love, pity, piety,
Have found a home, as from thy outward state
We clearly read, and are so rare and great
That they adorn none other like to thee!
Love takes me captive; beauty binds my soul;
Pity and mercy with their gentle eyes
Wake in my heart a hope that cannot cheat.
What law, what destiny, what fell control,
What cruelty, or late or soon, denies
That death should spare perfection so complete?

Joy May Kill

Too much good luck no less than misery
May kill a man condemned to mortal pain,
If, lost to hope and chilled in every vein,
A sudden pardon comes to set him free.
Thus thy unwonted kindness shown to me
Amid the gloom where only sad thoughts reign,
With too much rapture bringing light again,
Threatens my life more than that agony.
Good news and bad may bear the self-same knife;
And death may follow both upon their flight;
For hearts that shrink or swell, alike will break.
Let then thy beauty, to preserve my life,
Temper the source of this supreme delight,
Lest joy so poignant slay a soul so weak.



The Creation of Eve by Michelangelo (Sistine Chapel)

Love's Justification

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed:
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,

That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

On the Brink of Death

NOW hath my life across a stormy sea
Like a frail bark reached that wide port where all
Are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall
Of good and evil for eternity.
Now know I well how that fond phantasy
Which made my soul the worshiper and thrall
Of earthly art, is vain; how criminal
Is that which all men seek unwillingly.
Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,
What are they when the double death is nigh?
The one I know for sure, the other dread.
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
My soul that turns to His great love on high,
Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

A Poem

Ravished by all that to the eyes is fair,
Yet hungry for the joys that truly bless,
My soul can find no stair
To mount to heaven, save earth's loveliness.
For from the stars above
Descends a glorious light
That lifts our longing to their highest height
And bears the name of love.
Nor is there aught can move

A gentle heart, or purge or make it wise,
But beauty and the starlight of her eyes.

To the Supreme Being

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may;
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.



The Expulsion of Adam and Eve by Michelangelo (Sistine Chapel)

To Vittoria Colonna

When the prime mover of many sighs
Heaven took through death from out her earthly place,
Nature, that never made so fair a face,
Remained ashamed, and tears were in all eyes.
O fate, unheeding my impassioned cries!
O hopes fallacious! O thou spirit of grace,
Where art thou now? Earth holds in its embrace
Thy lovely limbs, thy holy thoughts the skies.
Vainly did cruel death attempt to stay
The rumor of thy virtuous renown,
That Lethe's waters could not wash away!
A thousand leaves, since he hath stricken thee down,
Speak of thee, not to thee could Heaven convey,
Except through death, a refuge and a crown.

Titania

by Patrick Bruskiewich

Queen of the Midsummer's
Princess of the Faeries
God has blessed her
With jewels that sparkle,
Orbs that titillate
And set men to lunacy.
Such splendor doth
Make Oberon jealous
Lest men do stray by moonlight.
She is Titanic ... with
Her Play on words,
Her puns, her linguistic fun
But! Prey tell, anger
Her nought for she
Shall lock wits with
The witless and leave
You less a man ...
A unique, cocklebind
And you the fool
Shall shake your speare
At her, then realize
Too late it has been thrown!
Come what might
She shall get to the
Bottom of it all

Of that is certain!
Sweet Titania, pink and white,
Dance your dance for us tonight
Fill the air with pixie dust
And magical perfumed lust
The centaurs, satyrs and minotaurs
With you in sight, will
Leave such marked appetite.
Let them then peer up to
The moon and thank heaven
For your graces, before seek thee
that other other place, your throne
where Cleopatra's envy
doth remind us that the Nile,
the fountain of life, is the
Aethiop's jewel, so much more
Splendid then that paltry bauble
Hung upon mere mortal men
And Soft, we know with certain that
She Titania is our Faerie Queen.

Yes is a pleasant country

by e.e. cumming

Yes is a pleasant country:

If's wintry

(my lovely)

He's open the year

Both is the very weather

(not either)

My treasure,

When violets appear

Love is a deeper season

Than reason;

My sweet one

(and april's where we're)



An artist with his muses

Towards Eros, Lost and Found

by Patrick Bruskiewich

Those Eros lost and found
And errors in a sorted life
Skirt you disaster here and there
Set thee coarse course, towards the dusk!

Led on by vesper's star
Sparkled against heaven's bent
Thrust upon the shallows, new spent
The shoals, the shawls, the gaule.

And when her hull is split
And Neptune's picturesques set in
Her boat shall float anew
awash with briny life

The flotsam will not come
Ere months and months on end
Instead a hull, new launched
Shall slip, then push ... then crawl

To splash into the dawn
And in its time set sail
The morning star, its future bound
Towards Eros, lost and found



Picture by Frank Eugene

Picasso

by e.e. cumming

Picasso

you give us things

which

bulge grunting lungs pumped full of thick mind

you make us shrill

present always

shut in the sumptuous screech of

simplicity

(out of the

black unbunged

something gushes vaguely a squeak of planes

or

between squeals of

nothing grabbed with circular shrieking tightness

solid screams whisper)

Lumberman of The District

your brain's

axe only chops hugest inherent

Trees of Ego, from

whose living and biggest

bodies lopped
of every
prettiness

you hew form truly



Drawing 12 by Patrick Bruskiewich

A Soft Carpel from Which it Sips

by Patrick Bruskiewich

The bee rubbed its abdomen
into the rich and succulent
Pollen, in complete abandon
in ecstasy, its thorax bent.

Rich nectar oozing from its tip.
It is delirious with its joy,
a portulent aft its nip,
but snatched up, no mere boy.

Its grand stinger's unsheathed
all rubbed raw but never used.
This cautious pointy beast
keeps himself busily amused.

His Nessus – a pink tulip
broad and unopened, a soft
carpel from which it sips.
Here's its stellation and its loft.

Nothing will bother this bee
not light, nor push, nor sway
It peers at all it sees
a thousand times its way.

Ah, this is its place
Here's its fuzz, its perch
where it dances in its daze
bares all in orgasmic lurch.

Oh, but if you poke your nose
unwelcomed in its private lair
if by chance you get too close
watch out – its best bee wary.

i like my body when it is with your body

by e. e. cummings

i like my body when it is with your body
it is so quite a new thing
muscles better and nerves more
i like your body. i like what it does,
i like its hows. i like to feel the spine
of your body and its bones, and the
trembling firm – smoothness and which
i will again and again kiss,
i like kissing this and that of you,
i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz
of your electric fur, and what-is-it
comes over parting flesh ...
and eyes big love-crumbs
and possibly I like the thrill;
of under me you so quite new



Photo by Frank Eugene

On Viewing Klimt's Danae for the First Time

by Patrick Bruskiewich

It was hard-on the first view
not to imagine a story behind
the painting. It was in Klimt's
studio that they first met –
a pfenning muse amongst the
amusing naked models – tall
ones, short ones, chubby ones,
some bossoms more bountiful
than others, thin ones too, some
too young to admit, no hags
or rags here, just beautiful women
waiting to be immortalized. There
were blondes, brunettes and red
heads – Gustav loved red
heads – her name was Molly
and she was a dish. It was not
just the alizarin hair on her head
he adored, but the fiery red
in that other private place that
fixated his amorous loins
and drove his art, much more
than his heart. He sketched her,
then mollified her in a painting
of divine rape – if there was
such a thing. For longer was

Gustav a mere artist but a God,
And she not a mere moll but a diva.
Between her loins he set the molasses
Of him, for it could not be golden
Given his sickly state – Vienna
Had been too kind to him!
But no matter, she felt mollitious,
having dashed from one state of
bliss to another across Europa.
She was, after all, a plain and simple
woman – but Gustav painted her
with mollescent divinity, he her
Jupiter and she soon to give
life to their Perseid, a star
that fell from heaven, a
daughter. His love towards
her was mollitious, for he was
after all a mollusk. While
she was with child Jupiter
was off with Venus, in some other
sacred place. But Danae was
used to being mollycoddle and so
coddle her he did, her and their
mollymawk, red hair as well.

As I stood before this painting
It was hard-on viewing Klimt's Danae
For the first time – not to fall
Completely and utterly in love,
And wonder what became of them both ...



Danae by Gustav Klimt

A Dilemma

by Blossom Lanton

I pace to and fro,
Stick in hand,
With the trees' shadows shaking below,
At my feet –
Whose chest do I wish to lie on?
I end the night with no answer to behold
I pick: not to pick
I choose to be, not to be

Corinnae Concubitus

by Ovid

In summer's heat, and mid-time in the day,
To rest my limbs, upon a bed I lay,
One window shut, the other open stood,
Which gave such light as twinkles in a wood,
Like twilight glimpse at setting of the sun,
Or night being past, and yet not day begun;
Such light to shamefaced maidens must be shown
Where they may sport, and seem to be unknown:
Then came Corinna in her long loose gown,
Her white neck hid with tresses hanging down,
Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed,
Or Lais of a thousand wooers sped,
I snatched her gown being thin, the harm was small,
Yet strived she to be covered therewithal,
And striving thus as one that would be cast,
Betrayed herself, and yielded at the last,
Stark naked as she stood before mine eye,
Not one wen in her body could I spy.
What arms and shoulders did I touch and see,
How apt her breasts were to be pressed by me,
How smooth a belly under her waist saw I,
How large a leg, and what a lusty thigh.
To leave the rest, all liked me passing well;
I clinged her naked body, down she fell:
Judged you the rest, being tired she bade me kiss;

Jove send me more such afternoons as this!

Book 1. Elegia V.



Photo by Frank Eugene

She Has Gone a Great Distance

by Patrick Bruskiewich

She has gone a great distance
leaving me forlorn, here
amongst the tears which fall upon
all from heaven above. Cast not
misfortunes that day by day
she remembers nought the
kindness, the softness, the
happy tidings. Let not the
sun burn her fair skin and
blind her to other things. Nor
the waves lap her legs above
her knees. She does not trust
the sea, you see. She would
rather not let herself be bait
to roving sharks. Or maybe
it is the salt, that assaults
her sensitive self. She prefers
a more tame and tranquil
place, where water falls from
the sky, afresh and anew.
Those pearls, azure, upon her
skin, pink and peach
caressingly soft ...

She has not left me, she
is here in my heart

.... even though she has gone a great distance.

He Wonders About Her

by Patrick Bruskiewich

The more he thinks of her,
the more he wonders about
her appetites ... her doubts,
and about what she fears ...

She has had more lovers
than days in a fortnight,
but that's what gives her bite
—it's the pash that matters.

She knows what she wants
in life — an island-nation she is!
This is what makes her his ...
He admires how she counts.

It's not the gathering of the bits
of this or that, the merging
of yang and ying, the surging
rush of ardour — life's hits.

It is her beauty, her laugh,
the wisdoms of what she speaks ...
It makes him seem so meek
— his measure less than five and a half.

She sees this and grabs hold of him,
that beautiful softness, and squeezes tight!
He does not mind, nor has he fright,
he wonders about her – it's her whimsy.

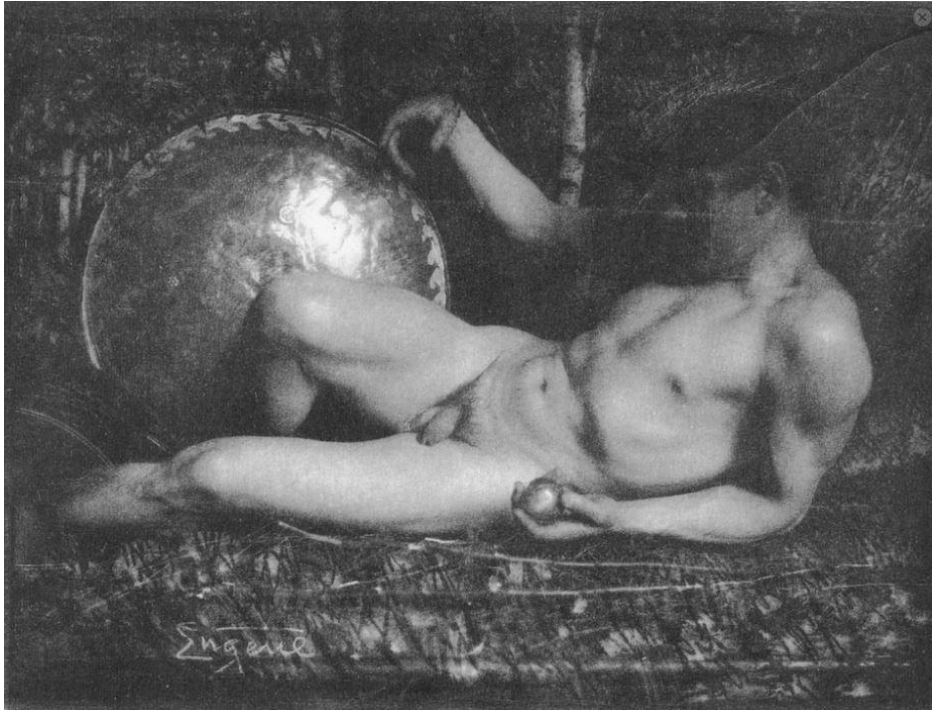


Photo by Frank Eugene

Joy Blossoms Forth

by Patrick Bruskiewich

At birth there was a precious seed
no bigger than a mote of fluff
from whence there grew with term
a sprig, much cherished and beloved.

The water, earth, sun and wind
lent this little babe its life.
From this small sprig there grew
the majesty of beauty and of youth.

With the passage of scarce time
the sprig became a bush then tree.
Its branches sprouted forth and buds
appeared, proclaiming loss of innocence.

Upon this gentle tree then sprang
leaves set against the bursting winds
which nourished so sweet a thing
first issued forth this month of May.

Such beauty did then blossom forth!
Oh sweet flower stay with us awhile
I beg you not to float to earth,
before I have a chance to share my love.

What guise is this, this pink fragrance
that scatters forth upon the breeze?
It is unsullied snow, I think,
gracious and lovely as herself.

At birth there was a precious seed
no bigger than a mote of fluff
from whence there grew with term
a sprig, much cherished and beloved.

Here today for such brief time
kept as remembrances tomorrow.
A sad flower never blossoms full.
Life is too short to abide in sorrow.

As the water, earth, sun and wind
helped the gentle tree to grow
so too will hope and love
lift a sad heart to paradise.

The cherry blossoms only
when life is radiant and feelings warm
Existence springs from happy thoughts
True beauty floats above the world.

When your heart is sad, remember
somewhere not far above your woe
there is a paradise of love in which
you will find a peaceful friend.

When Jack is in the Box

by Patrick Bruskiewich

The box, it lets us hide away
It is the place that says please stay!
For there is much pleasure in it.
And it's got its own bite ...

Sometimes there's pain there too,
But that does not long last. Soon
It catches the best of us
Boys – its fêted by our lust.

Some a thread bare ... some hid by rugs ...
It snatches us, then tugs, tugs, tugs
And some even sing and talk
When Jack is in the Box.

Oh Dorothea!

by Patrick Bruskiewich

She pulled her simple dress
off her body and over her head.
For a second her bare breasts
hung, pears to be plucked. Then
down her soft dark locks fell,
a curtain hiding her lush fruit.
There was an eagerness – her tell –
a hunger for a brute

And I saw her pink panties
too, crumpled moist and rucked
well into the best of her dainty
morsel! Do I have such luck!
I look around the room,
her place, the curious bed,
a cross on the wall, the doom
of the crucifixion and of dread.

A heavy pet just wasn't enough
now she's putting me to the test
and after all of that bluff
it's only human I guess.
She unbuckles my belt,
flicks her hair off her teats,
and asks me! How I felt.

Now we've got to do it!

she says and tugs down my pants
and all with such speed and skill
that the best of me is now at hand
yet her panties linger, cunneate still
- cunning girl – you've got to do it,
She pleads, and the opening act
begins, off comes the last of my kit.
She grabs at me – we tumble into the sack.

She smothers me, her breasts soft
flesh against my lips, milk gushes
hot, salty and sweet. It is her love
that's in her taste, her lust. She tries to rush us
but I just suckle, utterly, a calf to a heifer.
And so her pears become pomegranates.
She presses hard against me, with effort
I could breathe, she takes my life for granted.

I pull at her hair. She lifts her head
I take in a mouth full of air,
the room spins, is it me or her? The bed
rocks – it's her expectation – still her pair
of panties stay on. It is just too much!
She brushes against me, my eyes plead
She stares at me, she wants to push
She really wants us to do the deed.

Me! I am content to wait a bit
longer. She's less so, that I know,

but I am happy to feast at her tit
and let the best of me stand and grow.
I could feel her through the cloth,
Silk, soft and moist – was it her or me
I thought, what is it she really sought?
There was only one thing to do but see.

I let my hand creep along her back,
Down into her panties. Her skin was cold
And soft, a babe's bottom. Ah her rack
Such feminine flesh ... were I so bold
I would tear the cloth off her.
She squirts more milk into my mouth.
I squeeze her plumpness, kitty purrs
And starts to thrash about.

I open my mouth wide and suck
Her into me. I gulp her fullness –
such exquisite jello – she starts to buck,
her chest glows warm like a furnace.
She wants ts strip. I hold on
To her panties. Now she is the one
To wait. She thinks she's won
But it is I who now have the fun.

She reaches down and grabs me
But not the point but the rung.
She squeezes. I close my legs. See
I can't wait. I tickle with my tongue.
She jingles me. Oh my god, my
God, my god. I bare my teeth.

She snarls and by and by
She's now all bare beneath.

I have no idea what I am doing.
She knows this – her breasts I push
From my mouth – her lips spring
To mine. I feel her curls brush
And tickle me. She moves down, as I up.
We touch her sex and mine. It's exquisite.
What other way can this be described, cup
And saucer, the milk has been served. Is this it?

I move up – she moves away.
I grab her hips. She locks her knees.
I'm pinned! No not yet she says.
With me she can do as she please
And so she does. Cunnus forth and back.
She swings her hips and I keep time.
My pendulum swings back and forth, and
My sack swings full of nickles and dimes.

She gushes, she floods, we kiss
Her breasts press full against my chest
She moves down but somehow we miss.
She seems to know what's best
For both of us. Not yet! My eyes focus
On the cross. Along her I slip.
Oh my god, my god, my god. She sighs
I'm in the groove, this is it!

The best of her tickles the best

Of me. What perfection! We stop
Suddenly, as if it were time to rest,
But it is the feel of it. This can't be topped.
I can feel her pulse, she throbs,
Oh my god, my god, my god. Is this it?
I want to thrust but she fobs.

She starts to giggle with such glee
I start to giggle and jiggle too
Now its time! She un pins me
But I am not ready. What to do
I'm scared, boys and their toys,
Don't often play. Mine are brand new,
Unwrapped. She knows this. I plat coy
She bares down. Past her I flew.

A slip, sliding moment. It's lush!
She's annoyed with me – impatient in fact
All I can think to do is well ... blush.
She bares down, but I pull back.
She chases me to and fro – seeking
to hide me away. She grabs the head
and guides me. I am a voyeur peeking
at the unworldliness, here in bed.

How do they know to do this? These girls
Do they learn this at some secret school?
Such precious wisdoms are their perfect pearls
In the throws of her lust, she keeps her perfect cool
Then slowly – oh so slowly her second lips
Kisses the best of me. I dare not move.

Do boys really want to play such tricks
It depends what they are trying to prove.

She squeezes and smiled.

It this too much for me.

Oh my god,

my God

My God ...

stop!

She wraps her hand

around me

Hoping to stem

the flow, But it was

too late ...

Oh Dorothea!

I Want to Love you Wildly

by Anais Nin

“I want to love you wildly. I don’t want words, but inarticulate cries, meaningless, from the bottom of my most primitive being, that flow from my belly like honey. A piercing joy, that leaves me empty, conquered, silenced.”

“I love your silences, they are like mine. You are the only being before whom I am not distressed by my own silences. You have a vehement silence, one feels it is charged with essences, it is a strangely alive silence, like a trap open over a well, from which one can hear the secret murmur of the earth itself.”

“And silence. She liked the silence most of all. The silence in which the body, senses, the instincts, are more alert, more powerful, more sensitized, live a more richly perfumed and intoxication life, instead of transmuting into thoughts, words, into exquisite abstractions, mathematics of emotion in place of violent impact, the volcanic eruptions of fever, lust and delight.”

“When your beauty struck me, it dissolved me. Deep down, I am not different from you. I dreamed you, I wished for your existence. I see in you that part of me which is you. I surrender my sincerity because if I love you it means we share the same fantasies, we share the same madness.”

“I want to fall in love in such a way that the mere sight of a man, even a block away from me, will shake and pierce me, will weaken me, and make me tremble and soften and melt.”

“Passion gives me moments of wholeness”

“I am lonely, yet not everybody will do. I don't know why, some people fill the gaps and others emphasize my loneliness. In reality those who satisfy me are those who simply allow me to live with my "idea of them.”

“There were always in me, two women at least, one woman desperate and bewildered, who felt she was drowning and another who would leap into a scene, as upon a stage, conceal her true emotions because they were weaknesses, helplessness, despair, and present to the world only a smile, an eagerness, curiosity, enthusiasm, interest.”

“Anxiety is love's greatest killer. It makes others feel as you might when a drowning man holds on to you. You want to save him, but you know he will strangle you with his panic.”

There are two ways to reach me: by way of kisses or by way of the imagination. But there is a hierarchy: the kisses alone don't work.”

“Age does not protect you from love. But love, to some extent, protects you from age.”

“You carry away with you a reflection of me, a part of me. I dreamed you; I wished for your existence. You will always be a part of my life. If I love you, it must be because we shared, at some moment, the same imaginings, the same madness, the same stage.”

“Things I forgot to tell you:

That I love you, and that when I awake in the morning I use my intelligence to discover more ways of appreciating you.

That when June comes back she will love you more because I have loved you. There are new leaves on the tip and climax of your already over rich head.

That I love you.

That I love you.

That I love you.

I have become an idiot like Gertrude Stein. That's what love does to intelligent women.

They cannot write letters anymore."

When Does Real Love Begin?

by Anaïs Nin

“When does real love begin?

At first it was a fire, eclipses, short circuits, lightning and fireworks; the incense, hammocks, drugs, wines, perfumes; then spasm and honey, fever, fatigue, warmth, currents of liquid fire, feast and orgies; then dreams, visions, candlelight, flowers, pictures; then images out of the past, fairy tales, stories, then pages out of a book, a poem; then laughter, then chastity.

At what moment does the knife wound sink so deep that the flesh begins to weep with love?

At first power, power, then the wound, and love, and love and fears, and the loss of the self, and the gift, and slavery. At first I ruled, loved less; then more, then slavery. Slavery to his image, his odor, the craving, the hunger, the thirst, the obsession.”

—Anaïs Nin, *Fire: From a Journal of Love - The Unexpurgated Diary of Anaïs Nin*

“Dear Collector: We hate you. Sex loses all its power and magic when it becomes explicit, mechanical, overdone, when it becomes a mechanistic obsession. It becomes a bore. You have taught us more than anyone I know how wrong it is not to mix it with emotion, hunger, desire, lust, whims, caprices, personal ties, deeper relationships that change its color, flavor, rhythms, intensities.

"You do not know what you are missing by your micro-scopic examination of sexual activity to the exclusion of aspects which are the fuel that ignites it. Intellectual,

imaginative, romantic, emotional. This is what gives sex its surprising textures, its subtle transformations, its aphrodisiac elements. You are shrinking your world of sensations. You are withering it, starving it, draining its blood.

If you nourished your sexual life with all the excitements and adventures which love injects into sensuality, you would be the most potent man in the world. The source of sexual power is curiosity, passion. You are watching its little flame die of asphyxiation. Sex does not thrive on monotony. Without feeling, inventions, moods, no surprises in bed. Sex must be mixed with tears, laughter, words, promises, scenes, jealousy, envy, all the spices of fear, foreign travel, new faces, novels, stories, dreams, fantasies, music, dancing, opium, wine. How much do you lose by this periscope at the tip of your sex, when you could enjoy a harem of distinct and never-repeated wonders? No two hairs alike, but you will not let us waste words on a description of hair; no two odors, but if we expand on this you cry Cut the poetry. No two skins with the same texture, and never the same light, temperature, shadows, never the same gesture; for a lover, when he is aroused by true love, can run the gamut of centuries of love lore. What a range, what changes of age, what variations of maturity and innocence, perversity and art ... We have sat around for hours and wondered how you look. If you have closed your senses upon silk, light, color, odor, character, temperament, you must be by now completely shriveled up. There are so many minor senses, all running like tributaries into the mainstream of sex, nourishing it. Only the united beat of sex and heart together can create ecstasy.”

—Anaïs Nin, *Delta of Venus*



Drawing 11 by Patrick Bruskewich

Hills Like White Elephants

By Ernest Hemingway

The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out the flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express train from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.

“What should we drink?” the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table.

“It’s pretty hot,” the man said.

“Let’s drink a beer.”

“Dos cervezas,” the man said into the curtain.

“Big ones?” a woman asks from the doorway.

“Yes. Two big ones.”

The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl. The girl was looking off at the line of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.

“They look like white elephants,” she said.

“I’ve never seen one,” the man drank his beer.

“No, you wouldn’t have.”

“I might have,” the man said. “Just because you say I wouldn’t doesn’t prove anything.”

The girl looked at the bead curtain. “They’ve painted something on it,” she said. “What does it say?”

“Anis del Toro. It’s a drink.”

“Could we try it?”

The man called “Listen” through the curtain. The woman came out from the bar.

“Four reales.”

“We want two Anis del Toro.”

“With water?”

“Do you want it with water?”

“I don’t know,” the girl said. “Is it good with water?”

“It’s all right.”

“You want them with?” asked the woman.

“Yes, with water.”

The man and the women sit quietly. In a moment the bar keep returns with two glass of Anis de Toro. The bar keep sets the glasses down in front of them. The two of them take a taste of their green drinks.

“It tastes like licorice,” the girl said and put the glass down.

“That’s the way with everything.”

“Yes,” said the girl. “Everything tastes like licorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe.”

“Oh, cut it out.”

“You started it,” the girl said. “I was being amused. I was having a fine time.”

“Well, let’s try to have a fine time.”

“All right. I was trying. I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn’t that bright?”

“That was bright.”

“I wanted to try this new drink. That’s all we do, isn’t it – look at things and try new drinks?”

“I guess so.”

The girl looked across at the hills. “They’re lovely hills,” she said. “They don’t really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees.”

“Should we have another drink?”

“All right.”

The warm wind blew the curtain against the table.

“The beer’s nice and cool,” the man said.

“It’s lovely,” the girl said.

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything.

“I’ll go with you and stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s perfectly normal.”

“Then what will we do afterward?”

“We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before.”

“What makes you think so?”

“That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that makes us unhappy.”

The girl looked at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads.

“And you think then we’ll be all right and happy.”

“I know we will. You don’t have to be afraid. I’ve known lots of people that have done it.”

“So have I,” said the girl. “And afterwards they were all so happy.”

“Well,” the man said, “if you don’t want to you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you do it if you didn’t want to. But I know it’s perfectly simple.”

“And you really want to?”

“I think it is the best thing to do. But I don’t want you to do it if you don’t really want to.”

“And if I do it you will be happy and things will be like they were and you’ll love me?”

“I love you now. You know I love you.”

“I know. But if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you’ll love it?”

“I’ll love it. I love it now but I can’t just think about it. You know how I get when I worry.”

“If I do it you won’t ever worry?”

“I won’t worry about that because it’s perfectly simple.”

“Then I will do it. Because I don’t care about me.”

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t care about me.”

“Well, I care about you.”

“Oh, yes. But I don’t care about me. And I’ll do it and then everything will be fine.”

“I don’t want you to do it if you feel that way.”

The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees.

“And we could have all this,” she said. “and we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible.”

“What did you say?”

“I said we could have everything.”

“We can have everything.”

“No, we can’t.”

“We can have the whole world.”

“No we can’t.”

“We can go everywhere.”

“No we can’t. It isn’t ours anymore.”

“It’s ours.”

“No it isn’t. And once they take it away, you never get it back.”

“But they haven’t taken it away.”

“We’ll wait and see.”

“Come on back in the shade,” he said. “You mustn’t feel that way.”

“I don’t feel any way,” the girl said. “I just know things.”

“I don’t want you to do anything that you don’t want to do ---“

“Nor that isn’t good for me,” she said. “I know. Could we have another beer?”

“All right. But you’ve got to realize ---“

“I realize,” the girl said. “Can’t we maybe stop talking?”

They sat down at the table and the girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table.

“You’ve got to realize,” he said. “that I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to. “I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you.”

“Doesn’t it mean anything to you? We could get along.”

“Of course it does. But I don’t want anybody but you. I don’t want anyone else. And I know it’s perfectly simple.”

“Yes, you know it’s perfectly simple.”

“It’s all right for you to say that, but I don’t know it.”

“Would you do something for me now?”

“I’d do anything for you.”

“Would you please please please please please please please stop talking.”

He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights.

“But I don’t want you to,” he said, “I don’t care anything about it.”

“I’ll scream,” the girl said.

The woman came out through the curtain with two glasses of beer and put them down on the damp felt pads. “The train comes in five minutes,” she said.

“What did she say” asked the girl.

“... that the train is coming in five minutes.”

The girl smiles brightly at the woman, to thank her.

“I’d better take the bags over to the other side of the station,” the man said. She smiled at him.

“All right. Then come back and we’ll finish the beer.”

He picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the bar room, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He drank an Anis at the bar and looked at the people. They were all waiting reasonably for the train. He went out through the bead curtain. She was sitting at the table and smiled at him.

“Do you feel better” he asked.

“I feel fine,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.”

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The Wardrobe

by Thomas Mann

1899

It was cloudy, cool, and half-dark when the Berlin-Rome express drew in at a middle-sized station on its way. Albrecht van der Qualen, solitary traveller in a first-class compartment with lace covers over the plush upholstery, roused himself and sat up. He felt a flat taste in his mouth, and in his body the none-too-agreeable sensations produced when the train comes to a stop after a long journey and we are aware of the cessation of rhythmic motion and conscious of calls and signals from without. It is like coming to oneself out of drunkenness or lethargy. Our nerves, suddenly deprived of the supporting rhythm, feel bewildered and forlorn. And this the more if we have just roused out of the heavy sleep one falls into in a train.

Albrecht van der Qualen stretched a little, moved to the window, and let down the pane. He looked along the train. Men were busy at the mail van, unloading and loading parcels. The engine gave out a series of sounds, it snorted and rumbled a bit, standing still, but only as a horse stands still, lifting its hoof, twitching its ears, and awaiting impatiently the signal to go on.

A tall, stout woman in a long raincoat, with a face expressive of nothing but worry, was dragging a hundred-pound suitcase along the train, propelling it before her with pushes from one knee. She was saying nothing, but looking heated and distressed. Her upper lip stuck out, with little beads of sweat upon it – altogether she was a pathetic figure. "You poor dear thing," van der Qualen thought. "If I could help you, soothe you, take you in – only for the sake of that upper lip. But each for himself, so things are arranged in life; and I stand here at this moment perfectly carefree, looking at you as I might at a beetle that has fallen on its back."

It was half-dark in the station shed. Dawn or twilight – he did not know. He had slept, who could say whether for two, five, or twelve hours? He had sometimes slept for twenty-four, or even more, unbrokenly, an extraordinarily profound sleep. He wore a half-length dark-brown winter overcoat with a velvet collar. From his features it was hard to judge his age: one might actually hesitate between twenty-five and the end of the thirties. He had a yellowish skin, but his eyes were black like live coals and had deep shadows round them. These eyes boded nothing good. Several doctors, speaking frankly as man to man, had not given him many more months. - His dark hair was smoothly parted on one side.

In Berlin - although Berlin had not been the beginning of his journey – he had climbed into the train just as it was moving off – incidentally with his red leather hand-bag. He had gone to sleep and now at waking felt himself so completely absolved from time that a sense of refreshment streamed through him. He rejoiced in the knowledge that at the end of the thin gold chain he wore round his neck there was only a little medallion in his waist-coat pocket. He did not like to be aware of the hour or of the day of the week, and moreover he had no truck with the calendars. Some time ago he had lost the habit of knowing the day of the month or even the month of the year. Everything must be in the air - so he put it in his mind, and the phrase was comprehensive though rather vague. He was seldom or never disturbed in this programme, as he took pains to keep all upsetting knowledge at a distance from him. After all, was it not enough for him to know more or less what season it was? "It is more or less autumn," he thought, gazing out into the damp and gloomy train shed. "More I do not know. Do I even know where I am?"

His satisfaction at this thought amounted to a thrill of pleasure. No, he did not know where he was! Was he still in Germany! Beyond a doubt in North Germany? That remained to be seen. While his eyes were still heavy with sleep the window of his compartment had glided past an illuminated sign; it probably had the name of the station on it, but not the picture of a single letter had been transmitted to his brain. In still dazed condition he had heard the conductor call the name two or three times, but not a syllable

had he grasped. But out there in a twilight of which he knew not so much as whether it was morning or evening lay a strange place, an unknown town.

Albrecht van der Qualen took his felt hat out of the rack, seized his red leather hand-bag, the strap of which secured a red and white silk and wool plaid into which was rolled an umbrella with a silver crook – and although his ticket was labelled Florence, he left the compartment and the train, walked along the shed, deposited his luggage at the cloak-room, lighted a cigar, thrust his hands – he carried neither stick nor umbrella - into his overcoat pockets, and left the station.

Outside in the damp, gloomy, and nearly empty square five or six hackney coachmen were snapping their whips, and a man with braided cap and long cloak in which he huddled shivering inquired politely: "*Hotel zum braven Mann?*" Van der Qualen thanked him politely and held on his way. The people whom he met had their coat-collars turned up; he put his up too, nestled his chin into the velvet, smoked, and went his way, not slowly and not too fast.

He passed along a low wall and an old gate with two massive towers; he crossed a bridge with statues on the railings and saw the water rolling slow and turbid below. A long wooden boat, ancient and crumbling, came by, sculled by a man with a long pole in the stern. Van der Qualen stood for a while leaning over the rail of the bridge. "Here," he said to himself, "is a river; here is the river. It is nice to think that I call it that because I do not know its name." Then he went on.

He walked straight on for a little, on the pavement of a street which was neither very narrow nor very broad; then he turned off to the left. It was evening. The electric arc-lights came on, flickered, glowed, sputtered, and then illuminated the gloom. The shops were closing. "So we may say that it is in every respect autumn," thought van der Quaien, proceeding along the wet black pavement. He wore no galoshes, but his boots were very thick-soled, durable, and firm, and withal not lacking in elegance.

He held to the left. Men moved past him, they hurried on their business or coming from it. "And I move with them," he thought, "and am as alone and as strange as probably no man has ever been before. I have no business and no goal. I have not even a stick to lean upon. More remote, freer, more detached, no one can be, I owe nothing to anybody, nobody owes anything to me. God has never held out His hand over me, He knows me not at all. Honest unhappiness without charity is a good thing; a man can say to himself: I owe God nothing."

He soon came to the edge of the town. Probably he had slanted across it at about the middle. He found himself on a broad sub-urban street with trees and villas, turned to his right, passed three or four cross-streets almost like village lanes, lighted only by lanterns, and came to a stop in a somewhat wider one before a wooden door next to a commonplace house painted a dingy yellow, which had nevertheless the striking feature of very convex and quite opaque plate-glass windows. But on the door was a sign: "In this house on the third floor there are rooms to let." "Ah!" he remarked; tossed away the end of his cigar, passed through the door along a boarding which formed the dividing line between two properties, and then turned left through the door of the house itself. A shabby grey runner ran across the entry. He covered it in two steps and began to mount the simple wooden stair.

The doors to the several apartments were very modest too; they had white glass panes with woven wire over them and on some of them were name-plates. The landings were lighted by oil lamps. On the third storey, the top one, for the attic came next, were entrances right and left, simple brown doors without name-plates. Van der Qualen pulled the brass bell in the middle. It rang, but there was no sign from within. He knocked left. No answer. He knocked right. He heard light steps within, very long, like strides, and the door opened.

A woman stood there, a lady, tall, lean, and old. She wore a cap with a large pale-lilac bow, and an old-fashioned, faded black gown. She had a sunken birdlike face and on her brow there was an eruption, a sort of fungus growth. It was rather repulsive.

" Good evening," said van der Qualen. " The rooms? "

The old lady nodded, she nodded and smiled slowly, without a word, understandingly, and with her beautiful long white hand made a slow, languid, and elegant gesture towards the next, the left-hand door. Then she retired and appeared again with a key. " Look." he thought, standing behind her as she unlocked the door; "you are like some kind of banshee, a figure out of Hoffmann, madam" She took the oil lamp from its hook and ushered him in.

It was a small, low-ceiled room with a brown floor. Its walls were covered with straw-coloured matting. There was a window at the back in the right-hand wall, shrouded in long, thin white muslin folds. A white door also on the right led into the next room. This room was pathetically bare, with staring white walls, against which three straw chairs, painted pink, stood out like strawberries from whipped cream. A wardrobe, a washing-stand with a mirror ... The bed, a mammoth mahogany piece, stood free in the middle of the room.

" Have you any objections! " asked the old woman, and passed her lovely long, white hand lightly over the fungus growth on her forehead. - It was as though she had said that by accident because she could not think for the moment of a more ordinary phrase. For she added at once: " – so to speak?"

"No, I have no objections," said van der Qualen. "The rooms are rather cleverly furnished. I will take them. I'd like to have somebody fetch my luggage from the station, here is the ticket. You will be kind enough to make up the bed and give me some water. I'll take the house key now, and the key to the apartment. I'd like a couple of towels. I'll wash up and go into the city for supper and come back later."

He drew a nickel case out of his pocket, took out some soap, and began to wash his face and hands, looking as he did so through the convex window-panes far down over the

muddy, gas-lit sub-urban streets, over the arc-lights and the villas. - As he dried his hands he went over to the wardrobe. It was a square one, varnished brown, rather shaky, with a simple curved top. It stood in the centre of the right-hand wall exactly in the niche of a second white door, which of course led into the rooms to which the main and middle door on the landing gave access. "Here is something in the world that is well arranged," thought van der Qualen. "This wardrobe fits into the door niche as though it were made for it."

He opened the wardrobe door. It was entirely empty, with several rows of hooks in the ceiling; but it proved to have no back, being closed behind by a piece of rough common grey burlap, fastened by nails or tacks at the four corners.

Van der Qualen closed the wardrobe door, took his hat, turned up the collar of his coat once more, put out the candle, and set forth. As he went through the front room he thought to hear mingled with the sound of his own steps a sort of ringing in the other room: a soft, clear, metallic sound – but perhaps he was mistaken. As though a gold ring were to fall into a silver basin, he thought, as he locked the outer door. He went down the steps and out of the gate and took the way to the town.

In a busy street he entered a lighted restaurant and sat down at one of the front tables, turning his back to all the world. He ate a *soupe aux fines herbes* with croutons, a steak with a poached egg, a compote and wine, a small piece of green gorgonzola and half a pear. While he paid and put on his coat he took a few puffs from a Russian cigarette, then lighted a cigar and went out. He strolled for a while, found his homeward route into the suburb, and went leisurely back.

The house with the plate-glass windows lay quite dark and silent when van der Qualen opened the house door and mounted the dim stair. He lighted himself with matches as he went and opened the left-hand brown door in the third storey. He laid hat and overcoat on the divan, lighted the lamp on the big writing-table, and found there his hand-bag as well as the plaid and umbrella. He unrolled the plaid and got a bottle of cognac, then a

little glass and took a sip now and then as he sat in the arm-chair finishing his cigar. "How fortunate, after all," thought he, "that there is cognac in the world." Then he went into the bedroom, where he lighted the candle on the night-table, Put out the light in the other room, and began to undress.

Piece by piece he put down his good, unobtrusive grey suit on the red chair beside the bed; but then as he loosened his braces he remembered his hat and overcoat, which still lay on the couch. He fetched them into the bedroom and opened the wardrobe ... He took a step backwards and reached behind him to clutch one of the large dark-red mahogany balls which ornamented the bedposts. The room, with its four white walls, from which the three pink chairs stood out like strawberries from whipped cream, lay in the unstable light of the candle.

But the wardrobe over there was open and, it was not empty. Somebody was standing in it, a creature so lovely that Albrecht van der Qualen's heart stood still a moment and then in long, deep, quiet throbs resumed its beating- She was quite nude and one of her slender arms reached up to crook a forefinger round one of the hooks in the ceiling of the wardrobe. Long waves of brown hair rested on the childlike shoulders – they breathed that charm to which the only answer is a sob.

The candlelight was mirrored in her narrow black eyes. Her mouth was a little large, but it had an expression as sweet as the lips of sleep when after long days of pain they kiss our brow. Her ankles nestled and her slender limbs clung to one another.

Albrecht van der Qualen rubbed one hand over his eyes and stared and he saw that down in the right corner the sacking was loosened from the back of the wardrobe. "What – " said he ... "won't you come in – or how should I put it–out? Have a little glass of cognac? Half a glass? " But he expected no answer to this -and he got none. Her narrow, shining eyes, so very black that they seemed bottomless and inexpressive – they were directed upon him, but aimlessly and somewhat blurred, as though they did not see him.

“Shall I tell you a story?” she said suddenly in a low, husky voice.

“Tell me a story,” he answered. He had sunk down in a sitting posture on the edge of the bed, his overcoat lay across his knees with his folded hands resting upon it. His mouth stood a little open, his eyes half-closed. But the blood pulsated warm and mildly through his body and there was a gentle singing in his ears.

She had let herself down in the cupboard and embraced a drawn-up knee with her slender arms, while the other leg stretched out before her. Her little breasts were pressed together by her upper arm, and the light gleamed on the skin of her flexed knee. She talked ... talked in a soft voice, while the candle-flame performed its noiseless dance.

Two walked on the heath and her head lay on his shoulder. There was a perfume from all growing things, but the evening mist already rose from the ground. So it began. And often it was in verse, rhyming in that incomparably sweet and flowing way that comes to us now and again in the half-slumber of fever. But it ended badly; a sad ending: the two holding each other indissolubly embraced, and while their lips rest on each other, one stabbing the other above the waist with a broad knife – and not without good cause. So it ended. And then she stood up with an infinitely sweet and modest gesture, lifted the grey sacking at the right-hand corner – and was no more there.

From now on he found her every evening in his wardrobe and listened to her stories – how many evenings? How many days, weeks, or months did he remain in this house and in this city? It would profit nobody to know. Who would care for a miserable statistic! And we are aware that Albrecht van der Qualen had been told by several physicians that he had but a few months to live. She told him stories.

They were sad stories, without relief; but they rested like a sweet burden upon the heart and made it beat longer and more blissfully. Often he forgot himself – His blood swelled up in him, he stretched out his hands to her, and she did not resist him. But then for several evenings he did not find her in the wardrobe, and when she came back she did not

tell him anything for several evenings and then by degrees resumed, until he again forgot himself.

How long it lasted – who knows? Who even knows whether Albrecht van der Qualen actually awoke on that grey afternoon and went into the unknown city; whether he did nor remain asleep in his first-class carriage and let the Berlin-Rome express bear him swiftly over the mountains? Would any of us care to take the responsibility of giving a definite answer? It is all uncertain.

"Everything must be in the air "